



State of California  
**Respiratory Care Board**  
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May 13, 2002

**Inquiry:** I am submitting the following questions on behalf of my mother, who was recently told that she and the other non-licensed employees working in the blood gas lab at UCD Medical Center would be laid off so that their positions could be filled by Respiratory Therapists. I have already searched your web site extensively, including the Business and Professional Codes section to try and find direct answers and I was unsuccessful.

- (1) What are the personnel requirements for running blood gases and electrolytes? In other words, who is actually allowed to run the analyzers (separate from verifying the respective results)?
- (2) What are the requirements for being able to verify/send out blood gas and electrolyte results? (Does one require a specific license?)

**Response:** The regulatory function of blood gas laboratories is not a function of the Respiratory Care Board. That regulation is determined based upon the type of laboratory accreditation the lab holds. The College of American Pathologists (CAP) accredits some laboratories; others are accredited by the Joint Commission of American Hospital Organizations (JCAHO). Both have similar regulations that govern the functional operations of clinical laboratories. Their addresses are listed below. In addition, the State of California also has specific regulations that govern the quality of the lab and specific personnel requirements for oversight and testing. (See Business & Professions Code, Section 1245, in the copy of Laws and Regulations Relating to the Practice of Respiratory Care mailed to you)

**Joint Commission of American Hospital Organizations (JCAHO)**  
One Renaissance Blvd., Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181  
(630) 792-5000

**College of American Pathologists (CAP)**  
325 Waukegan Road, Northfield, IL 60093  
(800) 323-4040 (847) 832-7000

**Department of Health Services (DHS)**  
714/744 "P" Street, Sacramento, CA 95814  
(916) 445-4171

The Clinical Laboratory Improvement Act of 1988 also plays a part in the regulation and oversight of clinical laboratories. This Act has continued to be amended since its inception to improve the quality of labs across the country.

Respiratory Therapists are one licensed entity that does meet all the state and regulatory requirements for drawing, running and reporting blood gases and electrolytes. They are also one profession that specifically has this type of training included in its educational curriculum.

Reference # 2002-C-26